



TableTalk: Parshat VaYera

In this week's parsha, Abraham is a role model for us in his welcoming the angels (whom he thought were just passers-by). He offers them a place to rest, some shade, food and drinks. But what is really inspiring is the haste with which he accomplishes this *hachnasat orchim* (the mitzvah of welcoming in guests and people traveling by). In Chapter 18 verses 6-8, the Torah describes the way Abraham RAN AROUND getting everything ready: He RAN to Sara, his wife, and told her to HURRY and prepare the bread. Then he RAN to the cattle and HURRIED to prepare the meat.

Why was Abraham like that? What sorts of activities or tasks do you run to do? What are you more slow to accomplish? When you are excited about something, you run and don't waste any time! This trait is termed *zrizut* in Hebrew and means diligence or alacrity. The Rabbis in the Gemara teach us that "zrizin makdimin l'mitzvot"- people who have this trait of *zrizut* are early and first to do mitzvot. They have a love for the mitzvah and wouldn't want to be late. Here, Abraham, was so excited to be taking care of people that he acted with a zeal and passion that are inspiring to us all. (Especially after considering that he just had a circumcision at the ripe old age of 99!!)

What mitzvot do you get excited about and rush to do?

Discuss a mitzvah that is hard for you. How can you help yourself generate *zrizut* with regard to that mitzvah? What do people do to inspire motivation? Think about mitzvot as opportunities to bond with G-d and engage in a relationship with Him. Who wouldn't want to run to that??

Bracha Krohn, mom to an 11-year old boy, 7-year old girl and 5-year old boy, made aliyah to Efrat, Israel from Cleveland, Ohio in Summer 2008, with her husband Adi. She is Director of Guidance and faculty member at Midreshet Moriah in Jerusalem, a one year post-high school program for young women, and she teaches weekly for the Women's Beit Midrash of Gush Etzion. Her family spends the summers in camp where she teaches daily classes for camp staff. "Table Talk" is based on the ideas she and her husband, also a Torah educator, discuss with their children around their weekly Shabbat table.